



northern leopard frog

Rana pipiens

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Amphibia
Order:	Anura
Family:	Ranidae

Features

The northern leopard frog ranges from two to 3 1/2 inches long. Its body is brown or green. Two or three rows of dark spots are present between the dorsolateral folds (two parallel folds of skin that run down the back). The spots are rounded with light borders. More spots are present on the sides. The dorsolateral folds are light colored and continuous to the groin area. The vocal sacs of males are visible only when calling. There is a dark spot on the snout.

Natural History

The northern leopard frog sometimes is called the "meadow frog," because in the summer it often is found well away from water. It lives in marshes, streams, ponds, and lakes. It eats arthropods (spiders, insects, mites, etc.), mollusks (snails, slugs, etc.), and annelids (earthworms, leeches). This frog is a wary, alert, excellent jumper. It may scream when grabbed by a predator. Breeding occurs early April through June in ponds, lakes, sloughs, or flooded fields. The call of the male may be imitated by rubbing

a thumb across an inflated balloon. The female deposits about 3,000 to 5,000 eggs in three- to six-inch spheres, which are attached to submerged vegetation. Hatching occurs in ten days to two weeks. Transformation to froglets occurs June through August. The northern leopard frog is found in the northern two-thirds of Iowa, but is replaced by pickerel frogs in many of the cold water habitats of the northeast, and is sparsely distributed in southern counties.

Habitats

Mississippi River; Missouri River; interior rivers and streams; natural lakes and prairie marshes; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs; wet prairies and fens; temporary water supplies

Iowa Status

common, native

Iowa Range

statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.